

Senate Bill No. 75

CHAPTER 870

An act to amend Sections 1164, 1164.3, and 1164.12 of, and to repeal Section 1164.14 of, the Labor Code, relating to employment.

[Approved by Governor October 12, 2003. Filed
with Secretary of State October 12, 2003.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SB 75, Burton. Agricultural labor relations.

Existing law provides mediation procedures applicable to specified agricultural employers and labor organizations that are certified as the exclusive bargaining agent of a bargaining unit of agricultural employees. The procedures permit either party to seek assistance from the Agricultural Labor Relations Board in the event that the parties are unable to reach a collective bargaining agreement and to petition the courts for review of an order of the board imposing a collective bargaining agreement upon limited grounds. These mediation procedures will be repealed as of January 1, 2008.

This bill would eliminate the repeal of the mediation procedures. This bill further sets forth a nonexclusive list of factors that mediators appointed pursuant to those procedures would be permitted to consider in resolving the issues in dispute.

Existing law provides grounds upon which the board may accept for review a petition challenging provisions of a mediator's report.

This bill would include among those grounds a provision of the collective bargaining agreement set forth in the mediator's report that is arbitrary or capricious in light of the mediator's findings of fact.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. Section 1164 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

1164. (a) An agricultural employer or a labor organization certified as the exclusive bargaining agent of a bargaining unit of agricultural employees may file with the board, at any time following (1) 90 days after a renewed demand to bargain by an agricultural employer or a labor organization certified prior to January 1, 2003, which meets the conditions specified in Section 1164.11 or (2) 180 days after an initial request to bargain by an agricultural employer or a labor organization certified after January 1, 2003, a declaration that the parties have failed to reach a collective bargaining agreement and a request that the board

issue an order directing the parties to mandatory mediation and conciliation of their issues. “Agricultural employer,” for purposes of this chapter, means an agricultural employer, as defined in subdivision (c) of Section 1140.4, who has employed or engaged 25 or more agricultural employees during any calendar week in the year preceding the filing of a declaration pursuant to this subdivision.

(b) Upon receipt of a declaration pursuant to subdivision (a), the board shall immediately issue an order directing the parties to mandatory mediation and conciliation of their issues. The board shall request from the California State Mediation and Conciliation Service a list of nine mediators who have experience in labor mediation. The California State Mediation and Conciliation Service may include names chosen from its own mediators, or from a list of names supplied by the American Arbitration Association or the Federal Mediation Service. The parties shall select a mediator from the list within seven days of receipt of the list. If the parties cannot agree on a mediator, they shall strike names from the list until a mediator is chosen by process of elimination. If a party refuses to participate in selecting a mediator, the other party may choose a mediator from the list. The costs of mediation and conciliation shall be borne equally by the parties.

(c) Upon appointment, the mediator shall immediately schedule meetings at a time and location reasonably accessible to the parties. Mediation shall proceed for a period of 30 days. Upon expiration of the 30-day period, if the parties do not resolve the issues to their mutual satisfaction, the mediator shall certify that the mediation process has been exhausted. Upon mutual agreement of the parties, the mediator may extend the mediation period for an additional 30 days.

(d) Within 21 days, the mediator shall file a report with the board that resolves all of the issues between the parties and establishes the final terms of a collective bargaining agreement, including all issues subject to mediation and all issues resolved by the parties prior to the certification of the exhaustion of the mediation process. With respect to any issues in dispute between the parties, the report shall include the basis for the mediator’s determination. The mediator’s determination shall be supported by the record.

(e) In resolving the issues in dispute, the mediator may consider those factors commonly considered in similar proceedings, including:

- (1) The stipulations of the parties.
- (2) The financial condition of the employer and its ability to meet the costs of the contract in those instances where the employer claims an inability to meet the union’s wage and benefit demands.



(3) The corresponding wages, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment in other collective bargaining agreements covering similar agricultural operations with similar labor requirements.

(4) The corresponding wages, benefits, and terms and conditions of employment prevailing in comparable firms or industries in geographical areas with similar economic conditions, taking into account the size of the employer, the skills, experience, and training required of the employees, and the difficulty and nature of the work performed.

(5) The average consumer prices for goods and services according to the California Consumer Price Index, and the overall cost of living, in the area where the work is performed.

SEC. 2. Section 1164.3 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

1164.3. (a) Either party, within seven days of the filing of the report by the mediator, may petition the board for review of the report. The petitioning party shall, in the petition, specify the particular provisions of the mediator's report for which it is seeking review by the board and shall specify the specific grounds authorizing review by the board. The board, within 10 days of receipt of a petition, may accept for review those portions of the petition for which a prima facie case has been established that (1) a provision of the collective bargaining agreement set forth in the mediator's report is unrelated to wages, hours, or other conditions of employment within the meaning of Section 1155.2, (2) a provision of the collective bargaining agreement set forth in the mediator's report is based on clearly erroneous findings of material fact, or (3) a provision of the collective bargaining agreement set forth in the mediator's report is arbitrary or capricious in light of the mediator's findings of fact.

(b) If it finds grounds exist to grant review within the meaning of subdivision (a), the board shall order the provisions of the report that are not the subject of the petition for review into effect as a final order of the board. If the board does not accept a petition for review or no petition for review is filed, then the mediator's report shall become a final order of the board.

(c) The board shall issue a decision concerning the petition and if it determines that a provision of the collective bargaining agreement contained in the mediator's report violates the provisions of subdivision (a), it shall, within 21 days, issue an order requiring the mediator to modify the terms of the collective bargaining agreement. The mediator shall meet with the parties for additional mediation for a period not to exceed 30 days. At the expiration of this mediation period, the mediator shall prepare a second report resolving any outstanding issues. The second report shall be filed with the board.



(d) Either party, within seven days of the filing of the mediator's second report, may petition the board for a review of the mediator's second report pursuant to the procedures specified in subdivision (a). If no petition is filed, the mediator's report shall take immediate effect as a final order of the board. If a petition is filed, the board shall issue an order confirming the mediator's report and order it into immediate effect, unless it finds that the report is subject to review for any of the grounds specified in subdivision (a), in which case the board shall determine the issues and shall issue a final order of the board.

(e) Either party, within seven days of the filing of the report by the mediator, may petition the board to set aside the report if a prima facie case is established that any of the following have occurred: (1) the mediator's report was procured by corruption, fraud, or other undue means, (2) there was corruption in the mediator, or (3) the rights of the petitioning party were substantially prejudiced by the misconduct of the mediator. For the sole purpose of interpreting the terms of paragraphs (1), (2), and (3), case law that interprets similar terms used in Section 1286.2 of the Code of Civil Procedure shall apply. If the board finds that any of these grounds exist, the board shall within 10 days vacate the report of the mediator and shall order the selection and appointment of a new mediator, and an additional mediation period of 30 days, pursuant to Section 1164.

(f) Within 60 days after the order of the board takes effect, either party or the board may file an action to enforce the order of the board, in the superior court for the County of Sacramento or in the county where either party's principal place of business is located. No final order of the board shall be stayed during any appeal under this section, unless the court finds that (1) the appellant will be irreparably harmed by the implementation of the board's order, and (2) the appellant has demonstrated a likelihood of success on appeal.

SEC. 3. Section 1164.12 of the Labor Code is amended to read:

1164.12. To ensure an orderly implementation of the mediation process ordered by this chapter, a party may not file a total of more than 75 declarations with the board prior to January 1, 2008. In calculating the number of declarations so filed, the identity of the other party with respect to whom the declaration is filed, shall be irrelevant.

SEC. 4. Section 1164.14 of the Labor Code is repealed.

